

# Statewide Data Dashboard Gives Educators New Tool to Support Student Learning

The Delaware Department of Education's Education Insight system allows educators to make data-driven decisions to improve instruction and learning for Delaware's students.

Funded with part of the state's \$119 million federal Race to the Top grant, the project includes the development of web-based "dashboards" that provide educators access to timely and actionable information on all students to help manage academic performance and anticipate issues that could arise throughout the year. The dashboards aggregate data from existing sources to show a comprehensive view of each student – including items such as student biographical information, schedule, attendance, assessment scores, grades and credits – as well as roll-up views of the data for classrooms, schools and districts.

The system is designed to be a one-stop for student, class, school and district performance information.

"This tool helps educators better help their students," Governor Jack Markell said. "It aggregates available data so educators can more readily identify students who need help for any number of reasons. Because it's designed by and for teachers, the system intuitively serves teachers with relevant information they need at their fingertips "

Including maintenance, the state has spent \$1.3 million on the project. The state will continue to bring more data to the dashboard and use it to deliver much of the state's educational reporting.

Provided free of charge by the state to all districts and

charter schools, the dashboard includes a collection of research-based metrics predictive of education outcomes. Integrated from multiple sources- such as the state's eSchool system, Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System statewide accountability test results and DIBELS tests – the focus is on students and how they are performing.

The multiple functionality of the platform means teachers can use it to review information on their incoming classes, identify students at risk and plan interventions, design lessons or activities for their professional learning community (shared planning time among teachers) and incorporate all such information into parent-teacher and principal-teacher conferences.

“By providing easy access to student and parent contact information, the dashboard also makes it that much easier for teachers to engage parents in their children's learning, a vital link in improving student performance,” Secretary of Education Mark Murphy said.

Bunker Hill Elementary in the Appoquinimink School District was part of a pilot last spring. Principal Jeff Davis said his teachers quickly saw the value of the new tool.

“Bunker Hill teachers involved with the pilot program this spring found the Insight Dashboard incredibly helpful,” Davis said. “Our educators use current data from multiple sources in order to guide their instruction, and Dashboard made that easy. It will be an invaluable asset to all Delaware educators going forward.”

Several other features of the dashboard also are noteworthy:

- The platform requires no additional data input by teachers; instead, it makes disparate data accessible in a comprehensive way. Currently, a variety of online databases exist, but because they aren't user-friendly, they aren't well utilized. The resources also are not

necessarily linked together, prohibiting easy comparisons and analysis.

- The Insight Dashboard is accessible from any location, meaning educators can access their students' information, lesson plans and other curriculum materials at home, while traveling or when working from remote locations.
- The project complies with the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Educators only are able to see information that pertains to students to whom they have "legitimate educational interest."

Delaware's four-year plan for its data systems, as outlined in the state's Race to the Top application, will result in a significant expansion of the amount of data available for the department's use and for the department to share with other organizations. This is critical to the state's mission to improve educational outcomes for students. The state's plan includes:

- The Insight Warehouse project to integrate existing longitudinal data sets and provide user-friendly tools for reporting and analysis
- The Insight Dashboard project to present integrated views of student data to a much more accessible interface
- Increased reporting through increased exposure of DOE data to policy makers, researchers and the general public
- Expansion of the warehouse to subject areas such as early childhood, higher education, workforce and social services

The interim teacher dashboard has been under development since April 2011. Development of the expanded teacher dashboard as well as the principal, district administration and state dashboards have followed. A phased release with three districts (Appoquinimink, Lake Forest and Woodbridge) and one charter school (Providence Creek) began in April 2012. As

pilots, these districts and charter school were Beta testers of the interim dashboards, helping the state identify and communicate any bugs or functionality questions and helping to guide development processes. The statewide launch is Tuesday, Sept. 4.

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